A BRIEF HISTORY

OF

GRACE CHURCH
MT. AIRY

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

COLLATED BY THE

REV. JAMES H. LAMB, D. D.

WHO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHURCH FROM THE TIME WHEN THE FIRST MISSION SERVICE WAS HELD IN THE ENGINE HOUSE AT MT. AIRY, AND AT ONE TIME A MEMBER OF THE VESTRY, AND WHO ALL ALONG HAS BEEN INTERESTED IN THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE PARISH

NEARLY forty-two years ago, on Sunday, September 6, 1857, a few earnest workers met in a room over the old engine house in Miller Street, Mt. Airy, and organized a Sunday School. The number of children being so great, and the room being so small, another place had to be sought. The parlor of the house then known as the Steamboat House, on Main Street below Mt. Pleasant, was secured, and the Sunday School was transferred to that place on the first Sunday in October, just one month after the first service. Mr. Harry Smith, a candidate for Holy Orders, became the Superintendent, and with his assistance the Rev. A. B. Atkins, Rector of Christ Church, Germantown, was enabled to hold an afternoon service, which was also largely attended. The mission thus started became so promising that a number of gentlemen attended a meeting at Christ Church Rectory, at the invitation of the Rector, on August 18, 1858, to consider the desirability of forming a new parish. At this meeting it was decided the time had come when a new church should be established, and the following were nominated as the first Vestry: C. S. Carstairs, Henry Berry, Thos. H. Powers, A. S. Robinson, Eli Burrhouse, S. L. Creutzborg, W. E. Stone, P. E. Hamm, Clem Tingley, Jr., and Beekman Potter.

W. E. Stone was chosen as Secretary, and Messrs. Carstairs, Robinson and Stone were appointed a committee to procure a charter, and to receive title to the ground kindly offered by Michael Baker, Esq., upon which to build a church. The piece of ground offered, and afterwards received, was situated on Baker Street, or Willow Grove Turnpike, now Mt. Airy Avenue. On

August 23rd another meeting was held, and those nominated were declared duly elected, and the name chosen for the new church was "The Church of the Messiah." A building committee was then appointed of Messrs. Carstairs, Robinson and Berry, and a committee was also appointed to procure the consent of the Rector and Vestry of St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill, to the organization of a new parish.

Mr. Tingley was placed upon the committee to procure a charter in the place of Mr. Robinson, resigned. An offer from the ladies of Christ Church to hold a fair for the benefit of the new church in the Town Hall, Germantown, between December the 18th and 25th, was thankfully accepted. The title to the ground having been properly transferred, ground was immediately broken and the work of building begun. The corner stone was laid with appropriate services and an address by the Rev. A. B. Atkins on Saturday afternoon, September 18, 1858. The building was to be perfectly plain, simply a large room in which Sunday School and other services could be held, estimated at from $1,500 to $1,700. October 21st., at a regular meeting of the Vestry, the names of Nathan Birchell, James Yocum, Jr., and G. W. Merchant were added to the list of Vestrymen, the last mentioned to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Potter. At this meeting the name of the church was reconsidered, and the name of "Grace Church" substituted. The charter was adopted. Plans were presented for a neat little chapel costing about $1,900 to $2,000, with a seating capacity of from 250 to 300 persons. The building committee reported through Mr. Carstairs that such a building would cost very little more than one which was perfectly plain, and that the effect would be very much better. Subscriptions were reported amounting

to $900, whereupon the building committee were directed to accept the plans, and to advance the building as rapidly as practicable. The Fair was held in the Town Hall, Germantown, on the 14th, 15th and 16th of December, 1858, and netted $1,000. The building was completed and opened for the Sunday School on the first Sunday of April, 1859, the Sunday School and afternoon service having been continued in the Steamboat House up to this time. Mr. Harry Smith having been ordained deacon in June, 1858, had charge under the Rector of Christ Church. The church was consecrated by Bishop Bowman on the first Sunday in May, 1859, the Rev. Dr. Pratt of Philadelphia preaching the sermon. The Clergy robed in the house of Mr. Shermer, at the corner of Main Street and Mt. Airy Avenue. It was a novel sight in Mt. Airy to see the white-robed clergy marching to the Church. Mr. Smith continued in charge of the chapel, under the Rector of Christ Church, until the Spring of 1860. The success and growth of the congregation up to this time was due, under God, to Mr. Smith more than to any other. His winning ways and delightfully instructive addresses won not only the children to the Sunday School, but also their parents to the church services. These came to hear him speak to the children and stayed to the service which followed, and listened attentively while he was telling them of their duty to God and to man. Mr. Smith was ably seconded in all he did for the Sunday School and Church by a band of devoted Sunday School teachers, among whom may be specially mentioned Mr. and Mrs. Carstairs.

Mr. Smith was followed by the Rev. Mr. Nutt, who worked hard; but as he was in delicate health he lived but a short time. He, in turn, was followed by the Rev. Charles R. Hale, the present Bishop of Springfield, who

remained but a short time. He was followed by the Rev. Thomas S. Yocum, who did a very good work and was much beloved by the people. These gentlemen were assisted by Mr. George W. Elkins, who acted as superintendent of the Sunday School, and also as lay-reader, frequently holding services in the absence of a clergyman. In 1863 Mr. Charles M. Bayard, who had been a teacher in the Sunday School for some time, was elected a member of the Vestry. He has maintained an unflagging interest in Grace Church and parish and Sunday School from that time to the present (1897), in which he is followed by every member of his family. He has been superintendent of the Sunday School from April, 1865, and Accounting Warden from February, 1865, excepting the years 1873–74. At the same meeting at which Mr. Bayard was elected a member of the Vestry, it was proposed to enlarge the church by building an Infant School which was very much needed. Messrs. Bayard, Elkins and Merchant were appointed a building committee. After due consideration this committee proposed that the addition should be so constructed as to increase the capacity of the church, and at the same time provide an Infant School and Bible class rooms. Their proposal was accepted, and they were authorized to make such alterations. The work was begun in the Spring of 1864, Sunday School and church services being still held in the building (the end being closed with rough boards), and the building being cleaned every Saturday for that purpose. The building was finished in the late Fall, and it was consecrated by Bishop Potter on November 16, 1864. The Bishop preached, and was assisted in the service by the Rev. A. B. Atkins. The total cost of the improvement was $2,255.47. The Rev. Thomas S. Yocum resigned his position in connection with the parishes of

J. HENRY DUNN.
SECRETARY OF THE VESTRY.

Christ Church, Germantown, and Grace Church, Mt. Airy, to take effect as soon as a successor can be appointed. The resignation was accepted, and took effect September 10, 1865, after Dr. Shiras' acceptance of the Rectorship. On April 5, 1865, the Rev. J. Saunders Reed was elected Rector, part of his salary to be guaranteed by Christ Church, Germantown. Mr. Reed declined the election. On May 15, 1865, the Rev. J. R. Moore was elected Rector, and he also declined the election. On June 30th the Rectorship was tendered to the Rev. John G. Ames, who also declined. On August 25, 1865, the Rev. Alexander Shiras, D. D., was elected Rector. He accepted, and entered upon his duties October 1, 1865. Dr. Shiras was Rector but for a short period, his resignation taking effect on February 1, 1866. The Rev. Edward Hale was elected in April of the same year, and took charge May 1st, resigning after three months Rectorship, on July 31st. At this time the church became entirely self-supporting, and independent of Christ Church, Germantown.

On August 12, 1866, Rev. R. A. Edwards was elected Rector, and served the church for a period of nearly eight years. Under his faithful care and earnest ministrations, the church was much prospered. Mr. Edwards received a call to Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel, which he accepted, and resigned his Rectorship. On February 24, 1874, a call was sent to Rev. S. C. Hill, which he declined, and Rev. G. A. Redles was elected Rector on March 14, 1874, resigning in February of the following year. Rev. E. H. Kettell was then elected, but declined the nomination. Rev. S. C. Hill was again elected Rector on April 15, 1875, and, accepting the charge, commenced his duties the first Sunday in June, 1875.

The present Vestry is as follows:

CHARLES M. BAYARD, *Accounting Warden.*
FRANCIS I. GOWEN, *Rector's Warden.*
J. HENRY DUNN, *Secretary.*

EDWARD V. LANSDALE,	CHARLES S. TURNBULL, M. D.
J. PARKE HOOD,	HENRY L. BUTLER,
WILLIAM H. THORNE,	ROBERT S. BRIGHT,
A. L. E. CROUTER, M. D.	CHARLES H. LANDENBERGER.

There are a number of beautiful memorial windows in the church: One, the subject of which is "Christ Blessing Little Children," after Hoffman's celebrated painting, was put in by Dr. C. S. Turnbull, in memory of his daughter. Another, subject "The Resurrection," Christ, as the gardener, talking with Mary, was given by Mr. and Mrs. James Bayard, in memory of Charles P. Bayard and his wife. These were by Hardman & Co., London.

Another, by Tiffany, was given by Mr. McMichael, in memory of Mrs. Carstairs, a devoted worker in the early days of Grace Church, when it was but a mission. A fine chancel window, will be put in place some time during this Spring. The subject is, "The Ascension." It will be a memorial to Mrs. J. H. Dunn by her husband. Mrs. Dunn was so well known as an earnest and interested worker in the church that this window will be an inspiration to all who knew her.

POSTSCRIPT.

The window was put in place and finished August 19, 1899. The following account was in *The Church Standard*, Philadelphia, Pa., August 26th: "Grace Church, Mt. Airy, has been enriched by the gift of a beautiful window as a memorial of Mrs. J. Henry Dunn, who, with her husband, was a devoted member and earnest worker in Grace Church for more than thirty years, having seen the church grow from a mission to a strong parish. The window is a beautiful piece of art by Mayer, of Munich. The subject chosen is 'The Ascension.' Jesus is surrounded by the eleven Apostles, who are looking steadfastly toward heaven as their Master ascends. The admiration for each separate detail is lost in the reverence inspired by the intense beauty of Him in whom all the motives of the picture are centered."

THE VESTRY.

1858. August 18th.

C. S. Carstairs,
A. S. Robinson,
W. E. Stone,
Henry Berry,
Eli Burrhouse,
Thomas H. Powers,
Charles Tingley, Jr.,
P. E. Hamm,
Beekman Potter,
S. L. Creutzborg.

October 21st.

The name of the church changed to Grace Church. The vestry to consist of twelve members.

Nathan Birchell, James Yocum, Jr. and G. W. Merchant, the last named to fill the vacancy caused by the declination of Mr. Potter to serve.

1859. March 26th.

W. C. Taylor, in place of S. L. Creutzborg, resigned.

1861. October 22nd.

G. W. Elkins, J. B. Baker, S. Harvey Thomas and Henry Holmes, in place of Messrs. Burrhouse, Tingley, Hamm and Birchell, resigned.

1863. October 19th.

Charles M. Bayard, in place of J. B. Baker, resigned.

1864. November 28th.

Charles Dutilh and John Rush, in place of Mr. Carstairs, deceased, and Mr. Powers, resigned.

1866. April 3rd.

T. S. Williams, M. D., A. G. La Rue, ... Unruh, J. Henry Dunn, J. H. Lamb and Charles H. Miller to fill vacancies.

1867. April 30th.

Franklin B. Gowen, vice J. H. Lamb, resigned.

1868. April 22nd.

Admiral Samuel L. Breese, U. S. Navy, Dr. Philip Lansdale, U. S. Navy, and Lemuel Zell, to fill vacancies.

1870. Easter.

W. Moylan Lansdale, J. R. Shellenberger, M. D., Richard Jackson and William Jamerson, to fill vacancies.

1872. Easter.

Hon. George M. Stroud and John Waterhouse, to fill vacancies.

1873. Easter.

Charles LeBoutillier and Joseph W. Lewis, to fill vacancies.

1875. Easter.

Edward V. Lansdale, vice John Waterhouse, resigned.

1876. Easter.

Samuel Hood, William Dunlop, Charles H. Schurch, George S. Woodruff and William B. Averill, to fill vacancies caused by death and removal.

May 6th.

John Savage, vice Samuel Hood, declined to serve.

1878. May 1st.

Charles Robson, to fill a vacancy.

1879. April 21st.

Wm. W. Hand, vice Charles Robson, resigned.

1883. Easter.

Charles P. Bayard.

1884.

James Bayard, W. B. Marshall.

May 14th.

Francis I. Gowen, vice James Bayard, declined.

1886. Easter.

Charles S. Turnbull, M. D., to fill vacancy.

June 16th.

Charles C. Binney.

November 16th.

John M. Hartman, vice W. B. Marshall.

1888. Easter.

Arthur Scott, vice H. M. Hartman, declined.

1890. Easter.

John Parke Hood, vice Franklin B. Gowen, deceased.

1891. Easter.

Edward P. Cowell, vice Arthur Scott.

1892. October 4th.

Henry L. Butler, vice Albert G. LaRue, deceased.

1893. October 24th.

William H. Thorne, vice Charles C. Binney, resigned.

1897. Easter.

Robert S. Bright, to fill a vacancy.

1898. July 5th.

A. L. E. Crouter, M. D., vice William Dunlop, deceased.

1899. October 25th.

Charles H. Landenberger, vice Edward P. Cowell, resigned.